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Space Support Cell

Riding Space in the Iron Horse Division

By LTC Eric Henderson

LTC Eric Henderson is the Current Operations Chief for SMDC-Colorado Springs. He has commanded at the company and battery level three times. His military Space experience includes tours as an orbital analyst, both Deputy Chief and Chief of the Space Operations Branch, Cheyenne Mountain Air Station; Army Space Support Team Leader, ARSCC Commander; SMDC LNO to the Combined Arms Center, FT Leavenworth KS, and Space Support Element lead for the 4th Infantry Division.

U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command is no stranger to providing Space support to the warfighter. However, in Operation Iraqi Freedom, the command was challenged by injecting Space at the Division level, something it normally provides at a Corps, Task Force, or Theater level. The 4th Infantry Division asked for and subsequently received an Army Space Support Team. This was the first time an Army Division requested and received this type of Space support in the very harsh and austere Iraqi environment.

The Space support cell deployed into theater via U.S. Air Force lift on Friday, April 18, 2003. After road marching to Camp New Jersey, the team initially linked up with the Division Rear on Sunday, April 20, 2003. Coincidentally, the same day the Division Main deployed north into Iraq. Two days later the Army Space Support Cell integrated into a tactical convoy and made its way north, a two-and-a-half day road march with the 1st Battalion, 68th Armor.

After arriving at the Division Main site, the Space support cell quickly set up and within hours established connectivity with the SMDC Operations Center, Colorado Springs, Colo. In doing so, immediately the team began to leverage Space systems for the Iron Horse Division. The Space products and services provided fall into five Space Force Elements: Positioning, Navigation, and Timing; Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance; Space Weather; Satellite Communications; and Theater Missile warning.

Immediately, the Iron Horse Division Main learned of the added value of the Army Space cell's abilities when the Tikrit Presidential Palace Complex was attacked by a series of mortar explosions, rocket propelled grenades, and small arms fire. Though only set up for hours, the Space support cell promptly provided imagery of the complex and surrounding area. Using this product, security forces quickly planned a reaction operation. The result was the destruction of a residual terrorist group and capture of

its leaders in the early morning's light. While the attacks became less frequent as the local population sensed the strength and security of the Division, this situation serves as a very concrete example of the expedient force application of the Space support cell at a division level.

While numerous requests for imagery were readily met by the Space cell's abilities, on several occasions the cell leveraged other Army Space Support assets in the theater. Other Army Space Support Teams were called upon to meet the needs of the division. Utilizing the SSET-Light — a Space support system developed by the Command's Battle Lab — imagery was supplied by the Combined Forces Land Component Command's Space Support Team in Doha, Kuwait, the V Corps Space Support Team in Baghdad, and the Spectral Operations Resource Center (SORC) in Colorado Springs, Colo. Specifically, these products, pulled through the pipe, cut to a CD, put onto a slide, sent via an internal secure medium net through the division planners, made their way into the hands of brigade, battalion, and even company leaders, as the 4th Infantry systematically and thoroughly destroyed groups of resistance. These Space products enabled combat units to see first, understand first, act first, and finish decisively. The end result was the complete and utter destruction of numerous anti-American groups and units.

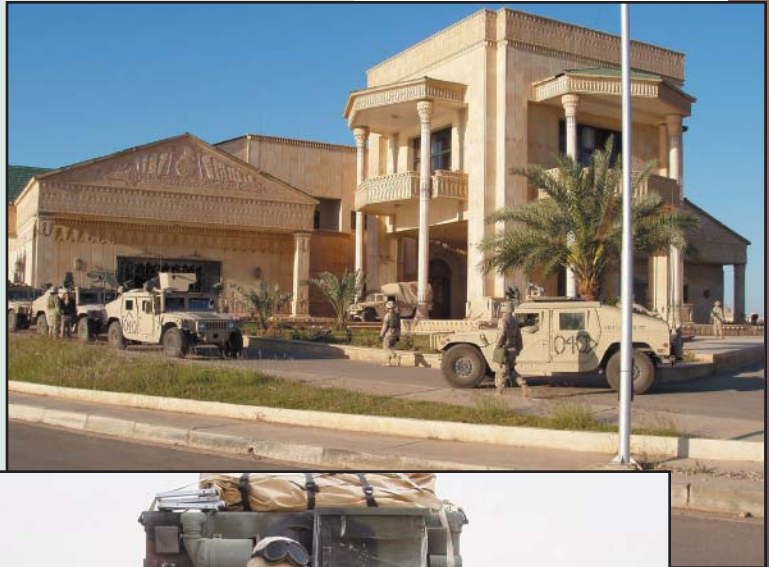
The 4th Infantry Division's Space cell posted the standard Space products on their host unit's "Dashboard." In this digitized division, leaders and subordinates had the ability to see daily Space updates and empowering information. The integration of Space at every opportunity and decision point facilitated planning and operations throughout the command's area of responsibility. Of particular note was the Space cell production of Space imagery used in the planning of negotiations. Space awareness and its impact on the battlefield allowed planners to anticipate the adversary's movements and positions in the Bacaba region. Leveraging reachback to the SORC, the Space cell

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provided updated products to the 4th Infantry Division Assault and tactical command post even as it moved to confront the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK), a force of more than 10,000. When confronted with the overwhelming evidence (including Space products) and the show of the division's resolve, the adversary surrendered without hostile activity or prolonged negotiation.

The division experienced a series of satellite communications challenges as the digitized division sought to communicate effectively. Frequency management became a priority after the Space support cell assisted the division G-6, and determined the impact and sources of units "self-jamming." Further assistance isolated problems with the Division's Global Positioning System-dependent SMART T and SCAMP terminals. Having verified all satellite operability, the Space operations officers sought assistance with the equipment's soft and hardware experts via the SMDC Colorado Springs G6 shop. Within 24 hours ten of the twelve assigned SMART T(s) and seven of eight SCAMP(s) were fully mission capable.

In conclusion, it isn't a question of whether a Space cell is needed at the division level; rather, it is a question of how robust a Space cell is required. Army Space and Missile Defense Command continues to leverage and integrate Space into every level of operations. The 4th Infantry Division's Iron Horse Team has defeated the enemy, provided security to the people of Iraq, and stabilized the Northern Iraqi Region. "Bringing Space to the WARFIGHTER" isn't a slogan in Tikrit, Iraq ... it is the normalization and operational implementation of an awesome combat multiplier.



Top, U.S. soldiers in Iraq make their way to one of many buildings that were converted into U.S. operational facilities; Bottom, l-r, CPT Tim Tubergon, LTC Eric Henderson and MAJ Sandy Yanna, members of Army Space Support Team 14 take a moment to relax during their recent deployment to Iraq. U.S. Army Photos